

IN THE CLAIMS

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. When strikethrough cannot easily be perceived, or when five or fewer characters are deleted, [[double brackets]] are used to show the deletion. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (Previously Presented) An advertising method for distributing advertisements to user terminals on a network from an awareness device for managing user status, the advertising method comprising:

storing as a user status-setting alternative a symbol representing an advertiser;
accepting from a primary user a request to use the symbol as a self-status designation;
and
distributing to a user terminal used by a secondary user the symbol representing the primary user's status via the network.

2. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

the symbol use request is accepted on a Web Page provided by the advertiser; and
the symbol is added to status-setting alternatives for a user requesting use of the symbol on the Web Page.

3. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

a request to use the symbol is accepted from the secondary user receiving the symbol as the primary user's status; and
the symbol is added to status-setting alternatives for the secondary user.

4. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

a request to use the symbol is accepted from the secondary user receiving the symbol as the primary user's status, and the symbol is added to status-setting alternatives for the secondary user; and

the secondary user or advertiser is requested to pay a charge for using the symbol.

5. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

the symbol representing the advertiser is stored with privileges the advertiser provides; and

when the request by the primary user to use the symbol as a self-status designation is accepted, the primary user is notified of privileges provided by the advertiser the designated symbol represents.

6. (Previously Presented) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

user-status symbol designation is accepted through a Web Page for the advertiser the Web Page providing privileges for users;

setting the symbol as user status is reported from the user terminal or the advertiser, to the awareness device; and

the symbol is set by the awareness device as the user status.

7. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

the advertiser's symbol is stored with a referral count for the symbol during predetermined period; and

the advertiser is billed according to the referral count during the predetermined period.

8. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

incentives are offered to the primary user according to a count of referrals by the secondary user to the symbol set as the primary user's status, or according to a copy count of times the symbol is added to status-setting alternatives for the secondary user; and

coupons from advertisers are offered to users according to the referral count or to the copy count.

9. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

purchasing information representing user purchase of the advertiser's items or services when purchased at an outlet is sent to an outlet terminal;

a predetermined process based on the purchasing information is performed at the outlet wherein the advertiser symbol and the user are reported from the user terminal or the outlet terminal to the awareness device; and

on receiving the report the awareness device sets as the reported user's status the symbol representing the reported advertiser.

10. (Previously Presented) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

content operable or available for output on the user terminals is stored with a symbol representing the content in at least one of the terminals on the network;

when a user selects any of the contents, the symbol representing the content and the user is reported to the awareness server from the at least one network terminal; and

the awareness device sets as the user's status the symbol representing the content.

11. (Original) An advertising method according to claim 1, wherein:

by storing the advertiser's symbol in a device installed in an outlet for the advertiser and wirelessly sending the symbol to a user terminal, the symbol of the advertiser is set as the user status when the user visits the outlet.

12. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable recording medium on which is recorded a program for an advertising method for distributing advertisements to user terminals on a network, the program being employed by an awareness device for managing user status, the program causing a computer to perform at least:

storing as a user status-setting alternative a symbol representing an advertiser;
accepting from a primary user a request to use the symbol as a self-status designation;
and
distributing to a secondary user the symbol representing the primary user's status.

13. (Previously Presented) An awareness server for managing user status, the awareness server communicatively connected to at least one user terminal via a network and comprising:

storing means storing as a user status-setting alternative a symbol representing an advertiser;
accepting means accepting from a primary user a request to use the symbol as a self-status designation; and
distributing means distributing to the at least one user terminal used by a secondary user the symbol representing the primary user's status via the network.

14. (Previously Presented) A user status setting method used for an awareness service accepting information on user status via a network and storing the information, accepting request by a user via a network and sending information on another user, and enabling a requested user to be referred to by request, comprising:

previously accepting a symbol including advertisement information from an advertiser as information for status setting of a user;
selectably presenting a symbol including advertisement information provided by the above-mentioned advertiser as information on a primary user status of a primary user;

setting a symbol including advertisement information selected by the primary user as the primary user status; and

presenting the symbol including advertisement information as the primary user's status information on a user terminal when a status reference request of the primary user from a secondary user is accepted.

15. (Previously Presented) An advertising method using awareness services accepting and storing information on user status via a network, accepting a request of a user and sending information on another user via a network, and enabling a required user status to be referred to, the method comprising:

accepting at a first time a symbol including advertisement information as information for user status setting from an advertiser;

selecting the stored symbol and setting the stored symbol as information of user status by the user; and

presenting the symbol including the advertisement information on a user terminal to a primary user requesting reference as status information set a secondary user when a reference request of the secondary user's status made by the primary user is accepted.

16. (Previously Presented) An advertising method using awareness services accepting and storing information on user status via a network, accepting a request of a user and sending information on another user via a network, and enabling a required user status to be referred to, the method comprising:

accepting at a first time a symbol including advertisement information and storing the symbol including the advertisement information as an alternative of user status setting from an advertiser;

selecting the symbol including the advertisement information provided by the advertiser and setting the symbol including the advertisement information as information on status of a primary user by the primary user;

presenting on a user terminal, when a reference request of the primary user is accepted from a secondary user, the symbol including the advertisement information as status information set for the primary user; and

setting by the secondary user the presented symbol including the advertisement information as a self status.

17. (Previously Presented) An awareness device for managing user status and distributing advertisements, the awareness device communicatively connected to at least one user terminal on a network and comprising:

a storage unit which stores a user status corresponding to a primary user and a destination list including information regarding a destination to which the user status is distributed;

an update unit which receives an update of the user status via the net work and updates the stored user status, the updated stored user status including a symbol representing an advertiser based on the received update; and

a notification unit which notifies the destination when the stored user status is updated,

wherein the at least one user terminal obtains the stored user status from the awareness device when the destination includes a secondary user of the at least one user terminal.